

Message Text

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INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00
USIE-00 INRE-00 OMB-01 TRSE-00 EB-08 CIAE-00
DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05
PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SSC-01 /068 W
-----211803Z 026603 /46

O R 211703Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 843
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY ROME
USCINCEUR
AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 08240

EUR FOR AMBASSADOR RUSH

CINCEUR FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT FR
SUBJECT: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS: SECOND ROUND RESULTS

REF: (A) PARIS 7424, (B) PARIS 7965

SUMMARY: THE UNION OF THE LEFT SCORED ADDITIONAL VICTORIES IN SECOND ROUND VOTING, GAINING CONTROL OF 28 CITIES PREVIOUSLY HELD BY THE MAJORITY, MAKING A TOTAL OF 60 CITIES WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 30,000 THAT HAVE
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NOW PASSED FROM THE "MAJORITY" TO THE LEFT OPPOSITION. ON A NATIONWIDE BASIS THE LEFT OBTAINED ABOUT 52 PERCENT OF THE VOTE, THUS SLIGHTLY BETTERING ITS 51-52 PERCENT SHOWING LAST WEEK. THE MAJORITY (IR) RETAINED CONTROL OF THE KEY CITIES OF TOULOUSE AND NICE BUT LOST IN LILLE, BEZIERS, BOURGES, NANTES, RENNES, SAINT-ETIENNE AND VILLEURBANNE. SECOND ROUND VOTING CONFIRMS COUNTRY-

WIDE GAINS OF THE LEFT IN THE FIRST ROUND, INCLUDING BREECHES IN TRADITIONALLY MAJORITY STRONGHOLDS SUCH AS THE WEST AND THE EAST. CENTER PARTIES DID PARTICULARLY POORLY, AND DEFEATS OF SEVERAL GOVERNMENT MINISTERS (DURAFOUR, D'ORNANO, BROUSSE, HABY, SEGARD) PROBABLY PRESAGES FUTURE CABINET CHANGES. PARIS RESULTS ARE DISCUSSED SEPTEL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN HEAVY NATIONWIDE VOTING, WHICH SLIGHTLY BETTERED LAST WEEK'S TURNOUT, THE LEFT CONSOLIDATED ITS ELECTORAL GAINS, WINNING CONTROL OF AN ADDITIONAL 28 LARGE CITIES FORMERLY HELD BY THE MAJORITY. IN THE TWO ROUNDS OF VOTING A TOTAL OF 60 LARGE CITIES HAVE PASSED TO THE LEFT, GIVING IT CONTROL OF 156 OF THE 221 CITIES WITH OVER 30,000 POPULATION, OF WHICH 82 ARE HELD BY THE PS (COMPARED WITH 46 BEFORE THE ELECTION) AND 71 BY THE PCF (COMPARED WITH 50 HELD PREVIOUSLY).

2. THOSE IN THE MAJORITY WHO WERE HOPING FOR A SECOND-ROUND MIRACLE WERE RUDELY DISAPPOINTED. PRELIMINARY FIGURES INDICATE THAT THE UNION OF THE LEFT OBTAINED 52-54 PERCENT OF THE NATIONWIDE SECOND ROUND VOTE (BASED ON FIGURES AVAILABLE AS OF MARCH 21) AS COMPARED WITH ABOUT 46-47 PERCENT FOR MAJORITY CANDIDATES. (NOTE: NOT ALL CITIES VOTED YESTERDAY; THOSE WHERE A LIST RECEIVED AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY THE PREVIOUS WEEK WERE SPARED A SECOND VOTE.) THE LEFT'S NATIONWIDE GAINS, INCLUDING VICTORIES IN AREAS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED TO BE MAJORITY STRONGHOLDS (THE WEST AND EAST) LEAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE LEFT PUSH IS CONFIDENTIAL

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GENERAL AROUND THE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THE MAJORITY MANAGED TO RETAIN CONTROL OF TOULOUSE, NICE (WHERE STATE SECRETARY AND INCUMBENT MAYOR JACQUES MEDECIN WON BY A RELATIVELY NARROW MARGIN), AND A NUMBER OF OTHER IMPORTANT CITIES, THE MAJORITY DID RATHER POORLY IN SECOND ROUND VOTING, FAILING TO TAKE A SINGLE LARGE CITY FROM THE LEFT OPPOSITION. GOVERNMENT MINISTERS DEFEATED IN RUN-OFFS INCLUDE MICHEL DURAFOUR (SAINT-ETIENNE), PIERRE BROUSSE (BEZIERS), RENE HABY (LUNEVILLE), NORBERT SEGARD (LILLE), AND MICH D'ORNANO (PARIS). SEPTEL REPORTING PARIS RESULTS.

3. SEVERAL FACTORS WERE IMPORTANT IN THE SECOND ROUND VOTING:

(A) WHILE IN THE PAST THE MAJORITY HAS BEEN ABLE TO "BEAT THE BUSHES" AND USE ANTI-COMMUNIST SCARE TACTICS IN CAMPAIGNING ON THE SECOND ROUND, ITS ANTICIPATED SECOND ROUND SUPPORT FAILED TO MATERIALIZE YESTERDAY.

INDEED, THE VOTES OF FIRST ROUND ABSTAINERS BENEFITTED BY AND LARGE THE LEFT CANDIDATES, WHO OBTAINED AN ESTIMATED 7 TO 3 MARGIN OF THE INCREASED SECOND ROUND TURN-OUT.

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(B) CONCOMITANTLY, IT APPEARS THAT THOSE WHO VOTED FOR ECOLOGY OR JOBERTIST CANDIDATES ON THE FIRST ROUND, TENDED TO VOTE FOR LEFT CANDIDATES IN THE SECOND ROUND. WE WILL NEED MORE COMPREHENSIVE FIGURES TO CONFIRM THIS PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS.

(C) IN THOSE CITIES WHERE THERE HAD BEEN FIRST ROUND PS/PC "PRIMARIES," PC VOTERS GENERALLY SUPPORTED PS CANDIDATES ON THE SECOND ROUND AND VICE VERSA. COHESION IN THE MAJORITY WAS ALSO FAIRLY GOOD, ALTHOUGH
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IN SOME CASES, PARTICULARLY IN PARIS, THERE ARE ACCUSATIONS THAT THIS TRANSFER OF SUPPORT WAS LESS THAN HOPED FOR. WE WILL BE REPORTING FURTHER ON THIS CRUCIAL ISSUE OF MAJORITY COHESION AS MORE COMPLETE FIGURES BECOME AVAILABLE.

(D) SECOND ROUND VOTING CONFIRMED VERY POOR SHOWING OF CENTER PARTIES, AND PARTICULARLY THE RADICAL SOCIALISTS WHO SAW ALMOST ALL OF THEIR TOP NAME CANDIDATES DEFEATED. WHILE IT IS TOO EARLY TO SPECULATE ON MINISTERIAL CHANGES, IT SEEMS IMPROBABLE THAT THE CENTRISTS' RELATIVE OVER-REPRESENTATION IN THE CABINET WILL BE CONTINUED FOLLOWING THEIR MUNICIPAL LOSSES. IF ONE CAN SPEAK OF A NATIONAL BIPOLARIZATION BETWEEN THE UNION OF THE LEFT AND THE MAJORITY, SUCH A DIVISION IS ALSO BECOMING MORE APPARENT WITHIN THE MAJORITY. IN LIGHT OF CHIRAC'S VICTORY IN PARIS AND THE GENERAL LOSSES OF CENTRIST AND IR CANDIDATES, THE RPR CONFIRMS ITS ROLE AS THE STRONGEST ELEMENT WITHIN THE MAJORITY, IF ONLY BY DEFAULT.

4. IN POST-ELECTION STATEMENTS ALL MAJORITY LEADERS ACKNOWLEDGED THE GAINS OF THE LEFT, AND LEFT LEADERS FOR THE MOST PART WERE RESTRAINED IN THEIR VICTORY STATEMENTS. PRESIDENT GISCARD HAS SO FAR REFRAINED FROM MAKING ANY COMMENT ON THE ELECTION RESULTS, AS HE DID FOLLOWING THE FIRST ROUND OF VOTING. PRIME MINISTER BARRE NOTED THE "INCONTESTABLE SUCCESS OF THE UNION OF THE LEFT," AND HOPED THAT THE MAJORITY WOULD DRAW THE NECESSARY LESSONS FROM ITS DEFEAT. HOWEVER, HE REITERATED HIS DETERMINATION TO CONTINUE HIS ECONOMIC GAMEPLAN WITHOUT CHANGE.
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